



# San Juan County Council

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District 1, Bob Jarman  
District 2, Rick Hughes  
District 3, Jamie Stephens

October 5, 2015

Tom Slocum  
Chair, SRFB Review Panel  
Recreation and Conservation Office  
PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

Re: San Juan County WRIA 2, Ecology of resident Chinook in the San Juan Islands,  
Long Live the Kings, #15-1239.

Dear Chairman Slocum,

The San Juan Islands are an important nearshore and marine habitat for juvenile Chinook, the resident form of Chinook, and adult Chinook returning to spawn. The highest catch rates for Puget Sound resident Chinook occur in the San Juan Islands. The San Juan Islands provide forage opportunities for Chinook stocks from around Puget Sound, the Fraser, and east side of Vancouver Island.

Since 2001, the WRIA 2 Lead Entity has worked on a series of assessments to fill critical data gaps in the San Juan Islands. A number of these assessments were SRFB-funded, including: WRIA 2 Assessment of resident and migratory salmon (#09-1601), Juvenile salmon prey base protection (#07-1770), and WRIA 2 habitat based assessment of juvenile salmon (#07-1863). These assessments led to our *Pulling it All Together* report (#10-1789), which formed the framework for our 2012 restoration and protection strategy.

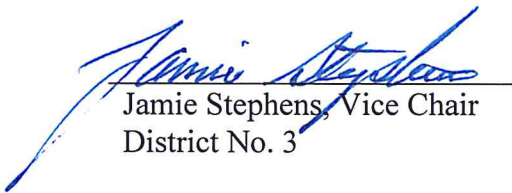
None of the above assessments addressed well what Chinook salmon eat in the San Juan Islands. In the San Juan Islands, our restoration strategy is centered on recovering or protecting forage fish, Chinook salmon food. This data gap led in part to the juvenile salmon assessment currently underway (Marine survival and growth of juvenile Chinook utilizing the San Juan Island, #13-1427), and the same data gap has led to the proposed Chinook project, Ecology of resident Chinook.

We have limited resources to expend on restoration and protection. We must maximize our effectiveness in doing our part to recover Chinook salmon. Which forage fish should we focus our efforts on, surf smelt, sand lance, or herring? The ongoing study (#13-1427), will give us a solid picture of the forage requirements for juvenile Chinook; the proposed study will do the same for resident sub-adult Chinook. Understanding their preferred forage is a data-gap, and will allow us to target our restoration efforts.

Our Citizen Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Group both ranked this project as #1 for this round. We support the Long Live the Kings assessment, and ask that you forward it to the SRFB for funding.

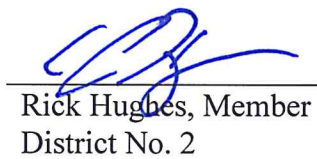
Best regards,

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
SAN JUAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



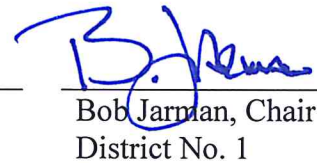
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Jamie Stephens, Vice Chair  
District No. 3



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Rick Hughes, Member  
District No. 2



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Bob Jarman, Chair  
District No. 1